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from the Committee for abolishing the Slave
Trade.

N O T E S

ON THE

T W O R E P O R T S

FROM THE

C O M M I T T E E

OF THE HONOURABLE

House of Assembly of Jamaica,

APPOINTED

To examine into, and to report to the HOUSE, the Allegations and Charges contained in the several Petitions which have been presented to the BRITISH HOUSE of COMMONS, on the Subject of the SLAVE TRADE, and the Treatment of the NEGROES, &c. &c. &c.

BY A

J A M A I C A P L A N T E R.

L O N D O N:

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

TH E following remarks are not published with a view to excite odium against any individuals, or bodies of men, but to elucidate truth, and to illustrate this general position, that the habitual exercise of that arbitrary dominion which the master possesses over the slave, communicates an involuntary bias, even to well disposed minds, against the just claims of humanity, and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to interpose effectual laws restraining such dominion. Notwithstanding the favourable light in which the framers of the Reports with the state of the laws in Jamaica previous to the Act of 1788 to be considered, it is evident from the Reports themselves, that a very imperfect and limited protection was secured to the slave. If the slave were killed it was indeed declared to be felony by a law passed so lately as 1787, but, the benefit of clergy not being barred, the punishment, of course, was slight, or more properly none at all. As to mutilation, dismemberment, and numberless modes of cruelty under which the slave might suffer, he appears to have been left very much at the discretion of his master:

For though a penalty of 100l. was laid on the master for such mutilation or dismemberment, yet as the testimony of the slave was not admissible against him, it is not probable that it could ever be recovered; and the 8th clause of the Act of 1781 (Report, p. 6.) which ordains the punishment of fine and imprisonment *on any person wantonly beating a slave not his own property*, plainly denotes the insecurity of the slave from such wanton assaults of his own master. The infrequency too of publick executions (p. 9.) seems to indicate either that the conduct of the slaves was not so vicious as has been represented, or that the master was accustomed to assume to himself the offices of judge, jury, and executioner. What indeed can be thought of the humanity of that code of laws which permitted mutilation and maiming, as judicial punishments for crimes! (see Report, p. 17). Every one who knows how deeply power corrupts the human heart, will lament the humiliating condition of the slaves, when so much licence was allowed to bad tempers, and when the very system of slavery tends to create or inflame such tempers.

The instance of suffering these lenient and salutary laws, *as they are called*, to lie totally extinct for three years, viz. from 1784 to 1787, (Report, p. 6.) is a striking proof of their inefficacy, and of the little regard paid to them.

The last law, passed in Jamaica in 1788 affords, however, a prospect of meliorating the situation of the slaves. A new law in Grenada professes the same benevolent purpose. Laws of melioration
and

and improvement are a credit to those who promote them, but they certainly imply former defects, and nothing can more fully confirm the accounts which are given of the tyranny of masters, than this tacit acknowledgment of the little restraint they were, till lately, under. This, indeed, is expressly admitted in the preamble to the Grenada Act, which is as follows:

“ Whereas the laws made for the protection of
 “ slaves have been found *insufficient*, and whereas
 “ humanity and the interest of the colony re-
 “ quire that salutary and adequate regulations
 “ and provisions should be adopted for rendering
 “ their servitude as limited and easy as possible,
 “ and for promoting the increase of their popu-
 “ lation, as the most likely means of removing in
 “ the course of time the necessity of further im-
 “ portations of negroes from Africa: And where-
 “ as these desirable ends cannot be so effectually
 “ obtained, as by prescribing *reasonable bounds to*
 “ *the power of masters and others having the charge*
 “ *of slaves*, by compelling them sufficiently and
 “ properly to lodge, feed, clothe, and maintain
 “ them, by introducing them to the knowledge
 “ of the Christian religion, and affording them
 “ opportunity of improvement in morality, and by
 “ inducing them to regular marriage, and when
 “ married, protecting them in their conjugal rights.”
 Be it therefore enacted, &c.

After all, when it is considered that the distance between a master and a slave is infinitely greater than that between any other situations in human life, it may well be doubted whether any laws can

be so framed as to afford effectual protection to the slave. If it is difficult, even in this free country, for a poor man to obtain legal redress for the oppression of the rich, how much more difficult must it be in countries where the dominion of the rich is so absolute, that the murmurings of complaint may be resented as an affront, and punished as a crime? While 'local policy' usurps the seat of equity, and 'requires a distinction between the modes of trying black or white persons,'† the administration of justice must be very defective and partial.

If, however, the planters by these Acts sincerely mean a gradual improvement in the state of the slaves, let us rejoice in the hope that a melioration of the state of slavery will be accompanied by a melioration of the tempers of the slave-holders, and that, by degrees, such manners and principles will prevail, as will render acts of tyranny and cruelty disgraceful in the eyes of the country. May the spirit of humanity, and the love of freedom, so congenial to the British nation, extend their influence till the legislatures, both national and provincial, may perceive that no substantial and durable interest can be derived from so polluted a source as slavery!

THE EDITOR.

† See Report, p. 16 in the notes.

N O T E S

O N T H E

R E P O R T S.

To ———

IN a former letter I mentioned the two Reports published by our House of Representatives on the applications of the people in Britain to the House of Commons, for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade; and having charged the said Reports with wilful deception, and holding out of false lights, I think it necessary to prove the charge, which I apprehend will be done by transcribing the pencilled notes I made in the margin of the printed copies of the said Reports, on the first cursory perusal thereof. But first I will premise, that “ the Committee, appointed to inquire
 “ into and report to the house the Allegations and
 “ Charges, contained in the several petitions which
 “ have been presented to the British House of
 “ Commons on the subject of the Slave Trade, and
 “ the Treatment of the Negroes, &c. &c. &c.” had two objects in view, and for the effecting of which the Reports are calculated, more than with any real intention or hope of solidly refuting the allegations and charges contained in the said petitions,

many of which the Committee knew were too well grounded in facts to be refuted.

The first object the Committee had in view was a very laudable one. There had been prepared, and was then pending, a bill for securing more impartial trials and better treatment to slaves; and the Committee were well informed that every opposition would be given to it in the Council. Those who disliked the bill, that is, those who did not like to have any penalties or restrictions laid on that cruelty, and injustice, which they were conscious they had been, and probably intended to be again, guilty of, said confidently, and people generally apprehended, that it would be thrown out by the Council. Some of the more sensible and humane members of the Committee conceived that, by quoting in their Report several of the most favourable clauses of the bill, that is, those which they apprehended would meet with most opposition in the Council, and be more like to occasion the miscarriage of the bill; by reasoning on, and taking credit for those clauses; by sending their report to the Governor, for his transmission of it to the Secretary of State, in order to its being laid before the King in Council; by publishing it, by printing it here, and by directing the Agent of the Island in London, to print it there, and not only to present copies thereof to the Members of each House of Parliament, and to each of the bodies which had petitioned the House of Commons, but also dispersing it generally through the kingdoms, the Legislature would be pledged to pass the bill into a law, and the Council seeing the disreputation and ill consequences that would result from their refusing

to give their assent, would also pass it, and it was known that the Governor was with the bill: or on the other hand, should the Council after all, determine to reject it, the odium would fall alone on that board, and not on the people at large, or on their representatives, who had shewn their willingness to have the law made, by having originated and passed it, which would tend to their exculpation in the eyes of the publick from the charges of cruelty and tyranny, more than any thing that could be offered in disproof of the allegations. I am afraid that too many wished for this cheap and plausible mode of exculpation, which would cost them nothing; for if the bill did not pass into a law, they would have credit for all that was good in it without being bound to the concessions which constituted that good: "*How can the people of Britain blame, or the Legislature go about to punish, us for abuses which we wish to reform, but are prevented from reforming by the Board of Council appointed by themselves;—say by the Crown?*"—With such as held up this dangerous idea, I reasoned thus: The island stands pledged by the Report, to pass the bill into a law, and if it shall not be passed, what can the nation think but that there has been a base collusion between the two branches of the Legislature here? Will not they argue after this manner? "Was there ever so base, so vile a subterfuge as this? They stood charged with cruelty, tyranny, and injustice, and how do they act under the charges?—We confess, say they, to the publick of Great Britain, (who are their accusers) we confess, that the laws respecting our slaves, are not so good as they might be; you have called our attention to them, and we see that they

require amendments; we thank you, and we will forthwith make the requisite amendments; our Assembly are already forward in the salutary work; they have prepared a bill, which when passed into a law, will secure our slaves from cruel treatment, and partial trials. But whilst they in effect say this, by publishing the Reports of their Assembly, nothing is farther from their intentions, than that such bill should be passed into a law. They knew that by a collusive agreement it was to be rejected by their Board of Council—they knew that Parliament would meet early, and that the House of Commons was pledged to take cognizance of the petitions on the Slave Trade amongst the first objects of their attention; and they conceived that the two Reports of their Assembly, and the copy of the bill alluded to, would not only satisfy the House, but also appease the petitioners at large, and the business would be suffered to die away; and they flattered themselves, that as the bill, by concert, would not finally be rejected till the close of their Session, before an account of its rejection could reach to Britain, it would be too late in the session here to resume a business of such importance, as the Abolition of the African Slave Trade. Surely those people are hardened in iniquity, and lost to all sense of shame." May not the people in Britain, I said, reason in this manner, and in resentment of such unworthy conduct, may not their indignation lead them to acts of severity, which they would not otherwise have thought eligible? And what but the detestation of all good men can be expected from such vile duplicity as we shall be thought guilty of? Do you suppose, that the people of Britain will easily lose sight of this great national business, in
which

which they are now involved? For after the matter hath been brought into open light, and agitated so, that no man can plead ignorance on the subject, it now concerns them as a nation; if they wink at our crimes, they will be partakers of our guilt, and must expect to partake of our punishment. I am persuaded, that there are myriads of men of sober minds, and cultivated understandings, as well as tender consciences, who think thus, for all who believe "that there is a God that judgeth the earth," must think so, and therefore they will not, they cannot with peace, lose sight of it. But some may say, Do you esteem it no injury to lose a whole day's labour of our slaves out of every twelve? And is it nothing that negroes and slaves shall be tried like white men, like free British men, by grand and petit juries?—What possible injury can that do to white men, if those juries, who are themselves white men, do justice on such trials?—But they are not by the bill to be tried like British men—*they are not to be tried by their Peers.*—But, are the eternal rules of justice to bend to the pride and caprice of one set of men, who happen, by some means, to be possessed with "*a little brief authority,*" to the prejudice and misery of others? Do you really suppose, that there are two sorts of justice with that Being who made all men of one flesh, though not all of one colour, and who is no respecter of persons, but amongst all nations and people, accepts of them who do justly, love mercy, and fear to offend him? As to this day in two weeks, I am convinced, on good grounds, that it would not be lost; it would be a benefit to all who cheerfully granted it. Does not the experience of all ages and nations shew, that in every climate, and
most

most in hot and debilitating ones, such as this, rest after labour is necessary? The Being, who created man, who knows his frame, and what his nature requires, has declared, that one day's rest after six of labour is requisite. Justice and obedience to the moral law out of the question, and considering negroes merely as labouring animals, will not their strength be renewed and invigorated by returns of rest, and will not they be thereby enabled to do more work in five days, so recruited, than in six, exhausted and dispirited by continual toil?—But that they would is not a matter of conjecture, or of argument: I have the irrefragable testimony of experience for it that they will. I give, I beg pardon, reason and humanity *give*, and I *allow*, them one day in each week to labour for themselves; God has given them another of rest from their labours; and I find, that in the other five they do more work without whipping, or fear of whipping, than many other peoples do in six, though urged by cruel severity.—Count what is lost by unwillingness and desertion, by advertising runaways, and sending out parties to search for and bring them in, and see to what it amounts? I have no deductions of that kind to make, for I have not, for years past, had one negroe absent for a day, without leave, though I take not the cruel, though common precautions to prevent their running away, by branding their flesh with the letters of my name, or the marks of my plantations.—It is to be hoped I brought over some to my way of thinking.—But to come back to the other object aimed at by the Committee in their Reports: It was simply to exculpate the island from the charges of cruelty, injustice, and tyranny; at any rate, right or wrong, to exculpate us.

This

This is a heavy charge, but I will prove it, and challenge any man of honour to deny it. Two of the most active Members in the Committee, both men of great humanity, whose negroes are treated with uncommon lenity, were earnest to purge the island from the charges of cruelty and injustice, which they thought did not exist, and they set about collecting such proofs and vouchers as they conceived would testify to the world how much the people of this island were misrepresented, and how injuriously calumniated; but what was their astonishment, when the inquiry which they had instituted, and from which they expected to refute the allegations and charges contained in the petitions to the House of Commons, furnished the most indisputable testimonies that the charges of cruelty, tyranny, and injustice were well founded? Cruelty and tyranny in the treatment of negroes by individuals, and publick partiality and injustice in trials, both of white people for such cruelty, and of negroes for crimes of which they stood charged.—What was to be done then? “If we report generally that some of the allegations and charges may be true, there will be great danger; but if we report particularly the result of our inquiries, there *will be an absolute certainty of the Slave Trade being abolished*. Let us then throw a veil over the past, since we can neither recall nor justify it; but let us exert ourselves, by all means, to prevent the like enormities in future.”

I come now to my notes on the two Reports of the House, which were written as I read them: they will tend to give a juster idea of the subject, perhaps, than a more elaborate treatise.

NOTES ON THE FIRST REPORT.

“ P. 2. The Committee are of opinion, that the
 “ principle of the said Act of the British Parliament*
 “ is founded in justice, humanity, and necessity;
 “ and that the provisions adopted therein, when
 “ further matured by the wisdom of parliament,
 “ must ultimately prove highly beneficial to the
 “ sugar colonies, inasmuch as it is notorious, that
 “ vessels have been frequently crowded with a
 “ greater number of negroes than they ought in
 “ prudence to have contained. And it is the opi-
 “ nion of the Committee, that the wisdom and
 “ authority of parliament might be beneficially
 “ exerted, in further regulations of the African
 “ commerce; particularly, in preventing the de-
 “ tention of ships on the coast; in prohibiting the
 “ purchase of slaves who shall appear to have been
 “ kidnapped, or deprived of liberty contrary to
 “ the usage and custom of Africa; and in com-
 “ pelling the said ships to transport an equal num-
 “ ber of both sexes, and to provide ventilators,
 “ and a sufficient quantity of provisions, especially
 “ water.—It seems not to be understood in
 “ Great Britain, that the inhabitants of the West
 “ India islands have no concern in the ships trad-
 “ ing to Africa:—The African trade is purely a
 “ British trade, carried on by British subjects re-
 “ siding in Great Britain, on capitals of their own;
 “ —the connexion and intercourse between the
 “ planters of this island, and the merchants of
 “ Great Britain trading to Africa, extend no fur-
 “ ther than the mere purchase of what British acts
 “ have declared to be legal objects of purchase.”

* The Act passed last session.

With respect to the crowding of vessels, see notes in the sequel, on the examination of Messrs. Chisolme, Anderson, and Quier.

The tender care professed here by a Jamaica House of Assembly, for the rights and liberties of the natives of Africa, is too extraordinary a circumstance not to strike the observation of the reader. Those who have given any attention to the publications on the use, propriety, and justice, of the slave trade, will have observed that of those who defend the benefit, right and justice, the most able, that is, the most artful, perceiving the impossibility of justifying our making slaves, or the encouraging others in the making slaves, of those who are born in a state of natural and political freedom, either deny that the natives of Africa have such rights, or allege that they have forfeited them to the laws of their country by crimes, the punishment of which is slavery. Some describe the governments in Africa to be universally pure despotism, or they argue as if they supposed they were such, and conclude that the state of slavery in the British colonies is so much preferable to the condition our slaves were removed from, that the change is a real blessing. Long, on this subject, (see chapters, I. II. III. Book 3. of the 2d vol. of his History of Jamaica, intitled Negroes) determined to lay a solid foundation for the wicked conclusions he intended to draw, supposes them scarcely, if at all, superior to brute beasts; the conclusion from which is, that they were meant for the slaves of men, white men to be sure, or Indians; for, according to Mr. Long, negroes are hardly men.

men. Then having reasoned them down to a level with ourang outangs, or rather the ourangs up to, or rather above the negroes, he proceeds to state that their government is so arbitrary, and their condition so absolutely slavish, that it is a great melioration of their state to transfer them to the condition of slavery, them and their posterity, in Jamaica or the other islands. *Now* we see it is admitted that there are free people in Africa, and an anxious care is taken by the legislature of Jamaica to observe that the rights of those free men shall not be infringed, lest it might draw the good people of Jamaica into the dreadful predicament of having bought as slaves those who had a right to freedom. Now, if one who has seen how negroes are sold on board a Guinea ship were to read this passage, and were to ask those conscientious committee men this question:—"You see, "Gentlemen, how very necessary it is to guard "against the kidnapping of free people of Africa, "and until some care shall be taken in that particular by the wisdom and authority of the "British parliament, pray how do you intend to "guard yourself from partaking in the same guilt "as the kidnapper? How have you guarded against "it hitherto? I suppose you either took with you a "linguist, and examined those you intended to buy "some days before the sale; or if that could not be, "and as it is impossible at the sale, then I suppose "on taking them home you went through the necessary scrutiny, and on finding that the negro was "born free, and had not forfeited that freedom by "committing felony, of course you restored him to "that liberty of which he was unjustly deprived."

I say,

I say, was any man seriously to put this question to the very men who framed that clause, they would laugh in his face. Let me speak out, that clause and several others in the bill, are merely held out to amuse the people at large in England, but here has no meaning, and I quote it to shew the low artifices which even a legislative body are obliged to stoop to, when to suppress what is true, and to affect what has no existence, becomes necessary to support the cause they advocate.

The salutary effects of ventilators in ships navigating tropical climates when crowded with people, is too well known to need any farther argument. I will only observe on this passage, that if government shall not think proper immediately to abolish the slave trade, but in humane consideration of the horrible condition of negroes in Guinea ships, shall by law oblige the owners of those ships to provide them with ventilators; that care be taken that they be constructed so as to perform their office by the agency of fire, wind, or the motion of the ship through the water, or by all of them; and not to require the labour of men to work them: and that proof shall be made on the entry of the ships in the islands, that such ventilators have been kept constantly operating: otherwise some things to which the names of ventilators may be given, will be put up merely to avoid the penalty of the law, but without answering the good purpose intended.

“P. 3. The Committee are further of opinion, that
 “as to the charges and allegations brought against
 “us, with regard to the treatment and situation
 “of

“ of slaves in this island, it is necessary, and easy,
 “ to disprove the same, by demonstrating, 1st, that
 “ negroes in this island are under the protection
 “ of lenient and salutary laws, suited to their situ-
 “ ation and circumstances;—2dly, that the slave-
 “ laws are executed with humanity, mildness, and
 “ mercy;—3dly, that the laws have made pro-
 “ visions to grant slaves days of rest, and to prevent
 “ their being in want of the necessaries of life;—
 “ and, 4thly, that the decrease of our slaves does
 “ not arise from the causes alledged in the peti-
 “ tions presented to the British House of Com-
 “ mons, but from various other causes not im-
 “ putable to us, and which the people in Great
 “ Britain do not seem to comprehend.”

For Remarks on the lenity of these laws, and of
 their execution, vide Notes on the Second Re-
 port.

S E C O N D R E P O R T.

For Observations on the renewal of the act of 1784, see note farther on.

“ On this subject we have to observe, that it
 “ appears by the letters of our Agent, that cer-
 “ tain heads of inquiry were transmitted to him
 “ a few months ago, from a Committee of the
 “ Lords of His Majesty’s Most Honourable
 “ Privy Council, many of which related to
 “ the condition and government of our slaves;
 “ and, in answer thereto, an abstract of most of
 “ our ancient slave-laws were laid before their
 “ Lordships; to which, if necessary, reference may
 “ be had; but it seems not to have been under-
 “ stood by our Agent, that in 1781, many of those
 “ laws were repealed, and all the subsisting laws
 “ and clauses of laws respecting the order and go-
 “ vernment of slaves were consolidated and brought
 “ into one act:—This act is known by the name
 “ of the Consolidated Slave Act; and, having ex-
 “ pired on the 31st day of December 1784, has
 “ since been renewed, with amendments. By
 “ the said act of 1781, Clauses 2d and 3d, all pos-
 “ sessors of plantations are obliged, under the pe-
 “ nalty of 50l. to allot provision grounds for each
 “ of their slaves, to allow them sufficient time to
 “ work the same, and also to keep in proper cul-
 “ tivation one acre of land, at least, for every four
 “ negroes in plantain-walk and ground-provisions,
 “ exclusive of the negroes grounds; and in case
 “ the owners or possessors have not lands proper
 “ for that purpose, they are required to make
 B “ some

“ some other ample provision for the support of
 “ their slaves.”

With respect to allowing *sufficient* time to work, as no time was specified by the act as *sufficient*, nor any made compulsory, none was allowed; and therefore this clause, though plausible, and quoted here as a proof of lenity, never operated in favour of one negro in the island, so far as to procure him the allowance of one hour, which the framers of the Report knew well, and which they own, when they come to claim credit for the parallel clause in the new bill. And I think it is no breach of charity to assert, that when the clause was inserted in the law, it was foreseen that as it was not compulsory on any, none would obey.

“ By clause 4th it is enacted, that every master,
 “ owner, or possessor of slaves shall, under the same
 “ penalty, provide and give to each slave proper
 “ and sufficient cloathing, to be approved of by
 “ the justices and vestry of the parish.”

As the act did not specify what quantity of cloathing was to be deemed *sufficient*, nor compel the justices and vestry to take cognizance of the subject, they of course did not take any. This clause therefore, like the preceding one, was specious, but nugatory, I shall in a subsequent note assign the real motives of these and similar non-effective clauses being inserted.

“ By clause 5th, slaves giving information of
 “ thefts, or other crimes and misdemeanors, are en-
 “ titled to pecuniary rewards; which is one proof,
 “ among

“ among others, that our laws consider slaves as
 “ capable of holding property, and will protect
 “ them therein.”

Why did not the Committee when they were expressly employed in quoting laws and clauses of the humane, mild, and salutary laws, why, I say, did not they quote the law, or clauses of laws, by which negroes are protected in the possession of property? Is it the law that orders them to be whipped for having more than five pound of meat in their possession?

“ By Clause 6th, the penalty of £. 100. is laid
 “ on any master or owner who shall mutilate or
 “ dismember any slave or slaves.”

To people in Britain it must appear strange, first, that there should be a necessity for a law to punish masters for mutilating and dismembering their servants; and still stranger, that a law should be extant for inflicting such punishment from the year 1717, and that great numbers of instances should be notoriously known to magistrates and judges; as well as others, of people having mutilated their negroes without any person whatever recollecting, at the times when such instances made it necessary to put the law in force, that there was such a law; stranger still, that the Committee should gravely affect astonishment at the people of England, alleging such things, when a little inquiry would have convinced them—of what? that the allegations *were totally groundless?*—no, by no means. But such inquiry would have convinced them that the minds of men become indurated by

the habitual prospect of oppression and misery. Hundreds of instances, aye doubtless thousands, of dismemberments, mutilations, and absolute murders have occurred, which, by reason of the evidence of negroes not being competent against white men, cannot be cognizable by magistrates. I know two men, now living, whose neighbours say positively, and every body believes, that each of them has murdered scores of their own negroes. One of those monsters has been heard to say, that since he became a planter on his own account, which was rather late in life, he had buried, as he termed it, 357 negroes : and yet this execrable being, affected to be astonished at a person's being so unpolite as to tell him, that if what his neighbours said of him was true, the wonder was not that he had buried so many, but that he had any above ground.

I must not, however, omit to give the clause of amendment in the law of 1787 the praise it justly merits ; it is a good clause, and not at all to be blamed for its not having been put in force oftner than it has been. I have for many years been conversant with Jamaica, and know but of one instance of the law against mutilation being enforced, and that instance occurred since the people in Britain have interested themselves in favour of the poor negroes : I have been speaking of the Act of 1717, but there is an amendment in the Act of 1787, which will have a good effect.

“ By Clause 7th it is enacted, that in case any person shall mutilate any slave the property of another, such further punishment would be inflicted, exclusive of the aforesaid fine, as the Court

“ Court should think proper ; and at the same time
 “ the owner of the injured slave is allowed to pursue his remedy for damages at common law.”

The *owner* of the injured slave is allowed to pursue, &c. And in the name of justice and mercy, why not the *injured slave* also allowed ? Is this disallowance amongst the other proofs that the law will protect him in the possession of property, when it provides no remuneration for the loss of his limbs or members ? Why, if the criminal is possessed of property, ought not he to be compelled to make restitution to the *injured slave* by purchasing his liberty, and providing for his support ?

“ By Clause 8th, any person wantonly beating
 “ a slave, not his own property, is liable to be
 “ indicted for the same, and punished by fine and
 “ imprisonment.”

The preceding note applies equally to this clause, why should the immediately injured be precluded all redress—in this world ?

“ When we reflect that many of these clauses were
 “ provisions of our ancient laws ; and, in particular, that the penalty on the master who should
 “ mutilate or dismember his slave, was enacted so
 “ long ago as the year 1717 ; and when we consider
 “ further, that the said act of 1781 was in full
 “ force until 31st December 1784 ; we cannot
 “ sufficiently express our astonishment and concern, that respectable bodies of men should have
 “ subscribed their names to allegations, which a

“ little inquiry must have convinced them were
 “ totally groundless.”

“ Enacted so long ago as 1717,” since then there have been numberless dismemberments, publicly known, which passed unnoticed by authority. I know one extraordinary instance of a man, I believe still alive, who dismembered his only negroe, and now is or lately was led about by that very negroe; the inhuman master having, soon after his barbarity to the poor slave, lost his sight. This is a notable answer to the argument made use of by some who are averse to restraining laws, viz. that a man’s slaves being his property, a regard to his own interest will prevent his injuring their life, health, or strength. I asked one of those advocates for uncontrolled power, if he ever knew a man hurt his horse by over-riding him? Oh yes. Had he ever known a man injure his health by drinking or other excess? Oh yes, many. Had he ever known any who had by gaming, or other extravagance, ruined their fortune, and brought their wives and children to distress and want? By this time he discovered what I aimed at, and was silent.

We see by the next paragraph, that the protection of the limbs and lives of the negroes was of so little weight with the legislature here, that they suffered the law of 1784, so much vaunted for affording that protection, to expire, and the wretched slaves to remain at the mercy (that is, the cruelty) of whoever chose to abuse them for three years.

“ By

“ By Clause 4th, regulations are made to prevent
 “ slaves being deserted in future by their owners,
 “ on account of age and infirmity; and, by a sub-
 “ sequent clause, the justices and vestry of each
 “ town and parish are empowered to lay a tax upon
 “ the inhabitants, for providing food, medical
 “ care, and attendance, on slaves already deserted
 “ by their owners, and who are disabled from
 “ labour by sickness, old age, or otherwise. And,
 “ in order more effectually to enforce the regula-
 “ tions of former laws, respecting the subsistence
 “ and cloathing of slaves, it is enacted, by Clause
 “ 6th, That every master, owner, or attorney,
 “ shall, under a penalty of fifty pounds, give in
 “ to the vestry, on oath, an account of the quan-
 “ tity of land in ground provisions (over and
 “ above the negro grounds), for the use of their
 “ slaves; or, in case there are not lands proper for
 “ the purpose, an account on oath of the means
 “ adopted for the maintenance and support of their
 “ slaves; and also, under the like penalty, give in
 “ an account of the cloathing actually served to
 “ each slave.”

The whole of the clauses mentioned here are ex-
 cellent. This is not only making laws, but pro-
 viding for their being executed; but as for “ the
 regulations of former laws,” as they are here
 termed, they were not when made, nor till these
 clauses were created, ever meant to be enforced.
 The giving into the vestry an account on oath of
 the quantity of land in provision, and of cloathing
 furnished to the negroes, will I think have the best
 effects; and the providing for deserted negroes, was
 listening at length to an evil of enormous mag-

nitude, which had long cried to heaven for vengeance. Horrible cruelties had been exercised in regard to negroes, who were rendered incapable of labouring by age or sickness, whose execrable masters, after having had the labour of all the healthy and vigorous years of their lives, deserted them in age, sickness, and imbecility; deserted them to all the horrors of nakedness, hunger, and helpless old age. But the guilt ended not there; some of those poor wretches in this situation would steal provisions, or something wherewith to procure provisions; and if detected, the master of the slave so detected, the very master who had deserted him, became his prosecutor; because being convicted and executed, he, the master, became intitled to and received from the publick forty pounds.

On this head let me mention a single circumstance. A planter once on a journey to Kingston, put up for the night at an inn kept by one Bailey, a strange fellow, but who was not destitute of humanity. In the dead of the night the house was alarmed with a cry of thieves. It was then the fashion to travel armed. On the alarm, the planter snatched up his sword, and ran out of the door, where he presently seized on a man who was breaking into the provision store. He had just secured him, with his back to the wall, and the point of his sword to his breast, when the people brought lights, and discovered this dreadful house-breaker to be a tall emaciated old man, whose woolly head was as white as snow, and who seemed hardly able to stand. The negroes immediately mentioned his name to the inn-keeper, who ordered them to bring him in, and gave direction to bring victuals and drink

drink with as much glee, as if the old man had arrived in a coach and six. The planter was pleased at his humanity, as he thought it, but was surprized at his frequently thanking the poor creature for coming to break into his store, and charged him always to come when he wanted victuals, and if the people were a sleep to break the pantry or the store.—“ You seem surprized, Sir, says he to the planter, but I will disappoint the scoundrel.” —“ What scoundrel ?” —“ This poor fellow’s master, Sir. I have known this negroe sixteen years, when he was worth any six negroes his master had; faithful, diligent, and skilful; but now he is worn down by age, and is grown silly, the scoundrel drives him away, in hopes that he will break into some house to steal, and be apprehended, when he will become the prosecutor, and claim by the law of the island forty pounds. But I will circumvent the rascal.” And then he laid the strictest injunction on his house-keeper, and servants, always to encourage the old man to come there for food. Now I am speaking of cruelty exercised on an old man, what will be thought of a chief justice of the island, whom I knew well? This man having heard that a favourite negroe man, in the vigour of his life, belonging to himself, was convicted and condemned to be hanged, sent off the fellow, under pretence of having him executed on the property he belonged to, in terrorem, to the other negroes, to a distant estate, and had a superannuated old watchman, past labour, hanged up in the stead of the criminal. It seems that the old man’s name was Mingo; and the only punishment the master underwent was that of being denominated in the party writings of that time, which were violent, *Old Mingo*.

By

“ By Clause 9th, the penalty on persons mutilating
 “ or dismembering their slaves is increased, by ad-
 “ ding to the fine of 100l. inflicted by former laws,
 “ the punishment of imprisonment, not exceed-
 “ ing twelve months; and, in certain cases, mu-
 “ tilated slaves are to be declared free :—and in all
 “ such cases the Court is authorized to direct, that
 “ the fine of 100l. be paid over to the justices and
 “ vestry of the parish, who, in consideration there-
 “ of, are to allow to such slave declared free, ten
 “ pounds per annum for maintenance and support,
 “ during life. By the same clause the justices and
 “ vestry are appointed a council of protection, for
 “ the purposes of making full inquiry into the
 “ mutilation of slaves, and for prosecuting to effect
 “ such owner or owners as may have been guilty
 “ thereof. And by Clause 10th it is enacted, That
 “ in case any information is made before any justice
 “ of the peace, that any slave or slaves is or are
 “ mutilated and confined, it shall and may be law-
 “ ful for such justice of the peace, and he is re-
 “ quired, to issue his warrant to the marshal or
 “ constable, to bring the slave or slaves before him
 “ for inspection. By this regulation the power of
 “ concealment is endeavoured to be taken from the
 “ owner; for, as it is not required that the in-
 “ formation should be on oath, the magistrate is
 “ enabled to obtain a view of the fact, on evidence
 “ which, in other cases, is, and ought to be, in-
 “ admissible.”

The whole matter of these clauses, like that of
 the preceding one, is most excellent, and will be
 attended with the most salutary consequences; for
 by the words *any information*, certainly the infor-
 mation

mation from a negroe should authorize the magistrate to issue his warrant, and the knowledge of this will be the means of preventing cruelty, or of detecting it.—The application of the fine, liberating the negroe, and appointing the justices and vestry a Council of protection, are all fraught with wisdom and justice, and shew that the Assembly is in earnest to put a stop to cruelty. Indeed their conduct, that is, of a majority of them, respecting the bill, is highly praise-worthy; but one cannot help regretting, that this law, or something like it, had not been passed long since. We became possessed of the island of Jamaica, I think, in A. D. 1655, and in 1781, nay, in 1788, that is 133 years after, we are beginning to make laws, for the first time effectual laws, for the protection of the lives and limbs of our negroes! What bloody entries have been made in the indelible records of heaven in that period?

“ By Clause 11th, it is enacted, That if any
 “ person shall murder any slave, whether his own
 “ property or not, he shall suffer death for such
 “ offence.”

“ And, in order more effectually to prevent the
 “ destruction of negroes, by excessive labour and
 “ unreasonable punishments, the surgeon of every
 “ plantation, by a subsequent clause, is required to
 “ give in, on oath, to the justices and vestry, an
 “ annual account of the decrease and increase of
 “ the slaves of such plantation, with the causes of
 “ such decrease, to the best of his knowledge,
 “ judgment, and belief.—On this head the Com-
 “ mittee cannot but remark, how tender and cau-
 “ tious

“ tious every rational manager must necessarily be,
 “ in the punishments which he administers, who
 “ considers that he has a resident inspector into his
 “ conduct; and that the punishment of death may
 “ follow an abuse of his authority.”

Here again rises the spirit of deception, and holds up these two specious, but fallacious clauses, to the eyes of the people of England at large, who will not, one in an hundred of them, know that by the common law, benefit of clergy is allowed, in all cases where it is not expressly barred by statute; and here we see that the statute does not bar it, therefore the murder of negroes stood after these acts, viz. acts of 1781 and 1787, just as it did before, that is to say, it was manslaughter, and the punishment, touching the hand with a warm iron. This being the case, and the Committee knowing it to be the case when they formed their report, how could they hold up to the publick so palpable a deception, which they could not but know every man in the least versed in legal disquisitions, would see through?—But the formal and seemingly grave remark that concludes the last cited clause, is intolerable. Beyond a doubt, whatever corrupts the heart, darkens the understanding; or how else could men of strong abilities suppose, that so palpable a fraud would pass undetected, and unexposed?

“ Neither does the law extend its protection to
 “ the industrious and faithful negroe only; provi-
 “ sion is made for the support of such fugitives and
 “ criminals as are apprehended and lodged in the
 “ gaols and work-houses of this island; the daily
 “ allowance of good and wholesome food, required
 “ by

“ by Clause 31st to be given to every slave in confinement, being abundantly liberal, and, as we conceive, unexampled in most other countries, to unhappy persons in similar circumstances.”

This is a wise and meritorious clause. However, it hath not all the merit that would be attributed to it by people in England for the following reasons. Until the passing of the slave law, of the present session, there was no provision made by law for gaol deliveries of negroes, in consequence of which, negroes committed for pretended offences, have been suffered to remain in gaol for life, without any crime proved, without ever being brought to trial at all, and probably without any offence having been committed. A man at enmity with his neighbour, sees that a particular negroe is of the utmost consequence to his master, who, by means of that negroe, enjoys some advantage over his neighbours; perhaps he is an excellent sugar-boiler, a good distiller, cooper, mason, smith, or carpenter; he may understand the breaking of horses, cattle, &c.—or he rides race-horses, is a good coachman, butler,—or some how or other, he is the cause of envy to some person. That man's ox is killed, and he by rewards, or the fear of punishment, induces one of his negroes to inform that the envied negroe has killed it. He is thereupon committed to gaol, where, no longer exciting envy, he is forgotten, his master dies, or goes off the island, and the negroe remains for years in prison. Now, in this view, is there any thing above negative merit, in that legislature, which omitting to provide for speedy trials, and regular gaol deliveries, does not starve the neglected prisoners to death? Certainly not: but
some

some may suppose that no such cases happen—I aver they do: I was present this session, when, amongst other demands brought against the publick by the gaoler of Kingston, two were read and referred to a committee; one for the maintenance of a negroe, who had died in gaol, after having laid there six years, without having been brought to trial; the other, for the maintenance of another negroe, now living, and in gaol, who has been there seven years, without any trial.—The new law has provided for gaol deliveries, at least every three months. Respecting negroes committed, or more properly sent, to the work-house, it must be observed, that whoever pleases may send his own negroes to the work-house, without assigning any reason whatever, and order them to be punished; and is there then much humanity in not starving to death those who are arbitrarily sent to the work-houses, which here are houses of correction, and who are punished not only without trial, but often without crime, and merely at the suggestion of passion or caprice?

“ Having thus briefly stated the protection which
 “ the laws of this island have provided for our slaves,
 “ in the grand circumstance of personal safety; we
 “ now proceed to the *second* head, namely, to prove,
 “ *that the slave-laws in this island are executed with*
 “ *humanity, mildness, and mercy.*” By the slave-laws
 “ here alluded to, we understand the laws, and
 “ clauses of laws, which assign penalties and punishments on such offences and transgressions of
 “ our slaves as affect the publick: and, in order to
 “ obtain the fullest information on this head, we
 “ have called on the several clerks of the peace of
 “ the

“ the different precincts and parishes, for returns
 “ of all trials of slaves, with the charges, conviction,
 “ and punishment severally had thereon, for
 “ several years last past, viz. From the 1st of January
 “ 1784, to the 30th of September 1788;
 “ From these returns we are enabled to state the
 “ following circumstances:—

“ In the parishes and precinct of St. Catherine,
 “ St. John, St. Dorothy, and St. Thomas in the
 “ Vale, containing 21,772 slaves, the number of
 “ capital convictions and executions were four
 “ only, in the said interval:

“ In the parish of St. Andrew, containing 9,613
 “ slaves, we find only one execution, in the said
 “ interval:

“ In the parishes and precinct of St. Thomas in
 “ the East, and St. David, containing 23,373 slaves,
 “ the number of capital convictions and executions
 “ were ten, in the said interval:

“ In the parishes and precinct of St. Mary and
 “ St. George, containing 22,194 slaves, the number
 “ of capital convictions and executions were
 “ four, in the said interval:

“ In the parish of St. Ann, containing 13,324
 “ slaves, the number of capital convictions and
 “ executions were two, in the said interval:

“ In the parish of Trelawny, containing 19,318
 “ slaves, the number of capital convictions and
 “ executions were seven, in the said interval:

“ In

“ In the parish of St. James, containing 18,546
 “ slaves, the number of capital convictions and exe-
 “ cutions were three, in the said interval :

“ In the parish of Hanover, containing 17,612
 “ slaves, the number of capital convictions and
 “ executions were two, in the said interval :

“ In the parish of Westmoreland, containing
 “ 16,700 slaves, the number of capital convictions
 “ and executions were four, in the said interval :

“ In the parish of St. Elizabeth, containing
 “ 13,280 slaves, the number of capital convictions
 “ and executions were eight, in the said interval :

“ In the parishes and precinct of Clarendon and
 “ Vere, containing 22,234 slaves, the number of
 “ capital convictions and executions were seven, in
 “ the said interval :

“ In the several towns and parishes of Kingston,
 “ Port-Royal, and Portland, containing 12,928
 “ slaves, there do not appear to be any capital con-
 “ victions within the said period ; but the records
 “ of trials in the town of Kingston, previous to
 “ 1787, are not to be found.”

“ The total appears to be, 52 executions in four
 “ years and nine months, which is not more than
 “ 11 per annum for the last five years, out of
 “ 210,894 slaves :—a proof of lenity in the exe-
 “ cution of our criminal laws, not to be surpassed,
 “ as we conceive, by any nation in Europe. No-
 “ thing further, therefore, seems necessary to be
 “ added

“ added on this head, except the 40th Clause of
 “ the present Consolidated Slave-Bill, which directs,
 “ that in all cases where the punishment of death
 “ is inflicted, the execution shall be performed in a
 “ publick part of the parish, and with due solemn-
 “ nity; and care shall be taken by the gaoler or
 “ deputy-marshal, that the criminal is free from
 “ intoxication at the time of his trial, and from
 “ thence to, and at, the time of his execution,
 “ under the penalty of five pounds: and the mode
 “ of such execution is directed to be, hanging by
 “ the neck, and no other: It is likewise provided,
 “ that where several slaves are capitally convicted
 “ for the same offence, one only shall suffer death,
 “ except in cases of murder or rebellion.”

On this part of the Report I shall be compelled
 to renew the charges of suppression of evidence.
 To prove that the laws of the island afford protec-
 tion to slaves on the grand article of personal safety,
 the Committee ought to have shewn not only that
 the law had assigned adequate penalties and punish-
 ments on white people who abused, maimed, or
 dismembered slaves, but also that those provisions of
 the law had been faithfully exerted for the protec-
 tion and personal safety of slaves; neither of which
 they have done: for, in the first case, the highest
 punishment assigned by the laws, at the time the
 Report was made, for the most deliberate and bar-
 barous murder of a slave, was applying an iron to
 the palm of the murderer's hand, which might be
 warm or cold, according to the bribe given to the
 executioner; and this being the extremest punish-
 ment for aggravated murder, the punishment for
 inferior degrees of cruelty could not be much. I

repeat, that for dismemberment of slaves, I know but of one man punished, and that since the people of Britain have interested themselves on behalf of slaves; whereas I know many instances of dismemberments. I have already hinted at men now living, who have not only dismembered but murdered scores of negroes, and yet have never been called to any account.—On this head, let one instance suffice, which instance was known to the Committee: A Jew determined to whip one of his negroes to *death*, and avowed that determination; he began the lingering murder with his own hands, and whipped until his strength was exhausted, and then put the whip into other hands successively, and urged them on until the tragedy was compleated in his own presence, and by his own order: *all which was proved on his trial, of all which he was found GUILTY, convicted, and sentenced*; What?—Imprisonment for life? No:—For seven years? No:—He was fined in all he had? No:—In what? FIVE POUNDS!—with this mockery of God and justice, to give it an air of severity, that he should be imprisoned until he paid the fine, which he did instantly, and went out laughing. All this, I say, was known to the Committee at the very time the assertion of the protection afforded to the slaves in the grand circumstance of personal safety was made. I deny, that the slave laws have been executed with humanity, mildness, and mercy; and I aver, that the Committee, at the time they framed this deceptive report, had before them the most authentic proofs of abominable cruelty in the execution of those very laws: they acknowledge that “*they had callen on the several clerks of the peace*” of the different parishes, for returns of ALL
“ trials

“ trials of slaves, with the charges, CONVICTIONS, “ and PUNISHMENTS severally had thereon,” &c. Now, how comes it, that instead of ALL trials, CONVICTIONS, and PUNISHMENTS had thereon, the Committee have chose to report the convictions of *capital* offences only? The reason was this, the capital convictions were comparatively few in number (which, by the way, shews the wickedness of those writers who endeavour to represent the negroes as vindictive and irascible in the extreme) whereas the dismemberments and other violent punishments were so numerous that they would not bear inspection, with any hope of impressing Britons with the idea which was intended to be given, that the laws were administered with humanity, mildness, and mercy. This was the real reason of reporting on the *capital offences only*.

Parishes and Precinct of St. Thomas and St. David.—“ The number of capital convictions and “ executions were ten.” This parish, nevertheless, was infamous for dismemberment.

“ Parish of St. Ann’s.—Capital convictions and “ executions two.” In this parish, nevertheless, there are two men alive at this hour, whose neighbours say positively, and every one believes, have each of them murdered scores of their own negroes, of which murders no inquisition or inquiry of any kind has been made.

“ Parish of St. James.—Capital convictions and
“ executions three.” In this parish one ———,
destroyed in less than three years by cruelty and
absolute murder 136 of his own negroes, of which
C 2 murders

murders no inquest hath been made or taken ; and yet the Committee say that the slaves are under the protection of the laws with regard to personal safety.

“ In the parishes of Port-Royal, Portland, and Kingston, there do not appear to have been any capital convictions.” How should they appear, when the records by which only they could be shewn by the clerks of the peace, were not produced ? Had those records contained matter favourable to the object of the Committee, they would probably have been found, or rather, they would not have been lost.

“ The total appears to be 52 executions, in four years and nine months.” These are the executions by sentence of the law ; had the numbers of private murders been added, there would not have been room to mention lenity.

“ On the *third* ground of inquiry, we are to demonstrate, “ *That the laws have made provision to grant slaves days of rest, and to prevent their being in want of the necessaries of life.*”—Although we conceive that this assertion has been sufficiently established, by the recital already given of such clauses of our laws as relate to the subsistence of our slaves ; yet, as the words, “ sufficient time,” in one of the clauses referred to, left a discretionary power in the master, we shall take occasion, in a subsequent part of our report, to shew that the legislature has provided a remedy against any possible abuse of such discretionary authority : But the fur-

“ ther

“ ther discussion of this subject is deferred, until
 “ we treat of the new slave-bill, passed the present
 “ session.”

This article has been observed on before, and although it is there shewn that the provision, as it is termed, made by the law, had not had, nor could be expected to have any operation, yet the committee wish it to be supposed, that the laws amply provided for the purposes here mentioned; yet by referring to the new bill, the committee indirectly acknowledge the inefficacy of the old laws.

“ On the *fourth* and *last* ground of our re-
 “ searches, namely, to demonstrate, “ *That the*
 “ *decrease of our slaves does not arise from the causes*
 “ *assigned in the petitions presented to the British*
 “ *House of Commons, but from other causes not im-*
 “ *putable to us, and which the people of Great Bri-*
 “ *tain do not seem to comprehend;*” the Committee,
 “ after diligent inquiry and investigation, are of
 “ opinion, that the following are the principal
 “ causes to which the alleged decrease of our
 “ slaves ought justly to be imputed : 1st, *The dis-*
 “ *proportion between the sexes, in the annual im-*
 “ *portations from Africa: 2d, The loss of new ne-*
 “ *groes, on or soon after their arrival, from epidemic*
 “ *diseases brought from Africa, or contracted in the*
 “ *voyage.*”

“ Does not arise from the causes assigned,” not solely, but certainly in a very great degree.

“ Not imputable to us,” this assertion is so far just as it refers to the numbers which perished by
 C 3 famine

famine for want of the ports being open, and the disproportion between the sexes which is very great, and the diseases contracted in the voyage; but certainly a great proportion of the decrease arises from causes justly imputable.

It appears from the Report that 31,181 negroes have perished between the report of the ships and the days of sales; now, if we allow on an average, fifteen days between the days of reports and the days of the sales, and if we allow the passages from Guinea to the islands on an average to be four times as long, that is sixty days, and count the mortality on board during all the horrible circumstances of the passage, to be only in like proportion as to number of deaths, and add those numbers to 31,181, the number that perished in port, we shall have the whole number of lives lost by crowding, I may say, cramming, those wretches by hundreds into ships which are not sufficient to hold properly half the numbers that have been put into them.

Died after their arrivals,	—	—	31,181
On the passages,	—	—	1,24,724
			<hr/>
			1,55,905

One hundred and fifty-five thousand nine hundred and five negroes perished of those that have been embarked for Jamaica, say in port and in passages. Farther, let us suppose, that for all the windward and leeward islands belonging to Great Britain put together, a number of negroes have been embarked equal to those embarked for Jamaica, and that to the French, Spanish, Dutch, and Danish islands and colonies altogether, as many

as

as to the British; and that the mortality has been proportionate to the number, then the account of the loss of lives will stand thus:—

Lost of those embarked for Jamaica,	-	155905
Ditto, and leeward islands,	- -	155905
Ditto, foreign colonies,	- - -	311810
		<hr/>
		623620.

Six hundred and twenty-three thousand six hundred and twenty! a number at which humanity is petrified with horror. After mature consideration I do solemnly believe the real number to be much nearer the double of this.

The Maroon negroes should not be added to the number of negroes now alive in the island, in calculating the quantum of increase of slaves; for these people are not the progeny of negroes imported by the British, they are the descendants of the Spaniards when the island was conquered by Penn and Venables, who fled to the mountains and defended their liberty. It is true they have many concubines in the plantations in the lowlands, from which connexions no doubt children have sprung, but as the child follows the condition of the mother, and becomes the slave of the owner of the mother, it is evident these children rather incline the balance the other way.

I think the number of free people of colour estimated at 10,000, is taken much too high.

The time of four months allowed after the storms of 1780 and 1781, for the importation of provisions in foreign bottoms, was in reality not more than two months; for, as it was from the States on the continent only that we could expect any quantities of supplies, if we allow one month for the proclamation to reach them, and one month for the passage of the ships, there was not so much as two months for the American merchants to speculate in and collect cargoes of provisions: for undoubtedly towards the latter end of the third month of the proclamation, that is, the second of its promulgation in the states, they would begin to be fearful of their steps in case of contrary winds, or other detention arising after the time limited by the proclamation, and of their being seized. For to add to the calamities of the island, the revenue officers that were about that time sent out from Britain, seemed to be composed of pettyfogging attornies, or of such as had been instructed by them, how to construe the letter of the laws diametrically opposite to the spirit thereof; so that foreigners were terrified from coming into our ports. As to the prolongation for one month, it could hardly answer any good purpose, because by the time that foreigners could receive notice of it, the term of the prolongation would be expired, or expiring, and no time left to bring in this assistance. No man all the while blamed the Lieutenant Governor, because they knew that his hands were tied down by orders from home.

The constitutions of the negroes had been so debilitated and broken down by the former want of wholesome provisions, that they had not strength
to

to support themselves under the return of famine, and dropped off in numbers.

Horrible indeed was the tragedy after the fifth hurricane in 1786; and so far have the Committee been from exaggerating the calamities of the island, by stating the loss at 15000 of lives, that I am convinced from much inquiry, that they have stated *them* too low by several thousands. I cannot be supposed to be influenced by resentment from my own losses on this occasion, for thanks be to the God of mercy, I foresaw and was enabled to provide against the several droughts and consequent famines, so that I did not lose the life of a single negro, by the want of wholesome provisions: on the contrary, they were more healthy and vigorous than at any other time, so at least other people said; but I accounted for it from their comparing them with the poor emaciated famine-worn creatures they saw on other plantations, and the contrast was so striking, as could not but claim their attention. This brought about inquiries into my management of my negroes in regard to feeding them; and I have the comfort to be assured, that beside preserving my own negroes, I was the means of some thousands more being preserved.

Beside the enormous numbers that perished outright during the famine, and which from much inquiry and various relations, I am fully persuaded exceeded 21,000, I do firmly believe that a far greater number were so debilitated and broken down in their constitutions, that they gradually pined and lingered away; but as they died not during the immediate scarcity, their death was attributed

tributed to fluxes, dropfies, &c. without confidering that thofe difeafes were confequences of the debility induced by the preceding famine. Now, were the whole number of lives loft during the time of actual fcarcity, added to the far greater numbers who fell by its flow effects after the fcarcity was over, though as really deftroyed by the famine as thofe who fell during its rage, the fum would be horrible. But when we confider that had the latter hurricane occurred a few days, ten days fooner, an immense quantity of the great corn, the bulk of which was but juft got in when the ftorm commenced, and was the only fpecies of provision of confequence then in the ifland; I fay, that had that hurricane occurred ten days or a fortnight fooner, that would have, great part of it, been deftroyed: the certain confequences of which would have been univerfal famine, for every inferior fpecies of provision had been before exhausted. The ifland muft inevitably have been depopulated. Unthinking minds fay, that the deftruction that did occur, and the general deftruction which by divine mercy we barely efaped, had it alfo come upon us, were the effects of thofe tempefts and droughts and famines, and the inevitable works of God: the tempefts, droughts, and confequent famines were fo no doubt, and wrought for wife, good, and ultimately gracious purpofes; but if the deftruction of fo many poor flaves are to be attributed to Providence, it muft not be to its operations on the elements, fo much as by the blindnefs which was fuffered to come over the underftandings of thofe in the charge of government, to fuch a degree as to tie down the Governor of a colony at the diftance of 5000 miles,

so as that not only the property and happiness of that colony, but even its existence should be hazarded, rather than that he should depart from the regulations made in Britain. What will posterity think of such monstrous abuse of the powers entrusted in the hands of government for the benefit, protection, and general good of those who gave those powers into their hands? Nay, what will they think of a people who would submit to see daily sacrifices to the spirit of obstinacy, which a few men on the other side of the globe called wisdom? There was an easy remedy for those terrible evils, and which, if it had been timely applied, would have saved the lives of (in my opinion) more than 30,000 people; but we must believe that the spirit of blindness had stricken the minds of the people also, as well as those of their princes and rulers.

The Committee state two principal causes in addition to those mentioned before of the decrease of the negroes. 1st, The great proportion of deaths that happen among the negroes newly imported; and, 2d, the loss amongst the negro infants.

With respect to the first, great part of those deaths are the effects of the same causes which occasion so many deaths during the passage from Africa, and in the ports of the islands where they arrive, and before they are landed; these are perturbation of mind, foul and putrid air, water, and provisions, sorrow for what they have left, and dread of what they are going to.

For observations on the second, see the notes on the examinations of Messrs. Chisholme, Anderson, and Quier, annexed to the Report.

I have no doubt, but that the regulations made by the British Act of Parliament, in restraining and proportioning the number of negroes to be taken on board to the tonnage of the ships, especially if farther regulations should be added, respecting the time beyond which ships shall not remain on the coast of Africa, quantity of water, &c. will be the means not only of preserving the lives of thousands on the passage, but of many more, by preventing the infectious putrid disorders, which contaminate the blood of those who do not immediately sink under it.

“ The offender will have the security, both of
“ a grand and petit jury.”

This was struck out of the bill by the Council, and as the law now stands, there is no grand jury, and the petit jury consists but of nine. The assembly were obliged to concur; as they found after a conference of the two Houses, which lasted two days, the bill would be lost if they did not acquiesce in the alteration; nor indeed would it have passed at all, but for the alarm that was caught on the arrival, I may say the providential arrival, of a packet from Britain, which brought no dispatches but for the governor, and naval commanders in chief, and the Governor's declarations that the said packet was sent out by government expressly on the negroe business. This alarmed the Council, and such of the House of Assembly as had opposed
the

the most beneficial regulations in the bill. Which bill, as now passed into a law, after all the alterations by the council, still is an immense melioration of the situation of the negroes, if faithfully executed, amongst which this article is the first; that of providing gaol deliveries every three months at least, by PUBLIC TRIALS, not by dark and packed jundos in a corner; by the Justices being compelled to grant warrants on any information to bring before them negroes dismembered, mutilated, or cruelly treated—this last is, I believe, not in the bill expressly, but I hope Justices will think it implied;—by appointing councils of protection for the abused slave, without which an attempt to obtain redress would have been deemed an unpardonable crime, and punished with still greater cruelty;—by the providing provision for, and in some cases declaring them free;—by obliging the proprietors of slaves or other representatives to give in on oath, accounts annually of the increase or decrease of their slaves, and the respective Doctors who attend the plantations, to certify on oath the cause of the deaths;—by giving in like manner accounts of the quantity of cloathing supplied the negroes, and the quantity of ground cultivated in provisions, and the time allowed the slaves to cultivate their own grounds: all these are capital regulations, and if faithfully adhered to, will be attended with the happiest effects. Good laws can do much, but it is from the manners of a people that they must derive their best effects.

“ Neither courts of quarter session nor justices,
 “ shall have power to order any slave to be mutilated or maimed for any offence whatever.”

What

What must have been the practice that made it requisite to restrain courts and magistrates from maiming and mutilating?

The clause respecting the conversion and baptism of slaves is dust for the eyes of the people in Britain. It puts me in mind of a circumstance that occurred on board a coasting vessel, which was blown off the coast, the master and mate of which were totally ignorant of the methods of keeping an account of the ship's way in the ocean, and of ascertaining her place and situation to the land; which the seamen observing were greatly alarmed at. "I wish," said the master to the mate, "our poor wives knew where we are:"—"I wish," said one of the seamen, "we knew ourselves where we are." I apprehend there is something requisite previous to *masters, mistresses, and overseers* endeavouring to instruct their negroes in the principles of the *Christian religion*.

"Another very important object of this bill is
 "the correction of two material errors which had
 "been accidentally made in the consolidated slave-
 "bill of last year: The words, "*without benefit*
 "of clergy," in the clause which assigns the pu-
 "nishment of death to persons wantonly killing
 "a negro or other slave, having been undesign-
 "edly omitted—these are now restored:—And
 "another clause in the said consolidated slave-bill,
 "which inflicted punishments on persons wanton-
 "ly and cruelly beating slaves, and imprisoning
 "them without sufficient support, having been
 "interpreted not to extend to such slaves as were
 "the

“ the property of the offender, has been amended,
 “ and the protection which it affords is now ex-
 “ tended to all slaves, without distinction.”

How does this comport with the grave observations and cautions cited in pages, 6, 7 and 8.

“ Further, in the view of restraining arbitrary punishments, it is, by the said bill, enacted, That no slave on any plantation or settlement, or in any of the workhouses or gaols in this island, shall receive more than ten lashes at a time, and for one offence, unless the owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, or overseer of such plantation or settlement, or supervisor of such workhouse, or keeper of such gaol, shall be present; and no such owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, or overseer, supervisor, or gaol-keeper, shall, on any account, punish a slave with more than thirty-nine lashes, at one time, and for one offence, under the penalty of five pounds for each offence, to be recovered against the person directing or permitting such punishment.

I do not like the manner in which this clause is expressed, I fear it will be greatly abused, “ at one time AND for one offence,” I think it should have been, *for one offence*: as it now stands, I apprehend the number of lashes limited by the law will not prevent the repetition of the same number of lashes, the day after the first whipping is inflicted, and so *de die in diem*, to the extent of the rage and cruelty of the person who directs the punishment.

“ Another

“ Another object of this bill (as hath been al-
 “ ready observed) is to secure to our slaves days
 “ of rest, and sufficient time to cultivate their
 “ grounds, in order to prevent their being in want
 “ of the necessaries of life: For which purpose,
 “ after reciting, that although it hath been cus-
 “ tomary with the planters in this island to allow
 “ their slaves one day in every fortnight (exclu-
 “ sive of Sundays); yet this indulgence not being
 “ compulsory, it is enacted by the said bill,
 “ that the slaves belonging to, or employed on,
 “ every plantation or settlement, shall, over and
 “ above the usual holidays allowed them at
 “ Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, be allow-
 “ ed one day in every fortnight, to cultivate their
 “ own provision-grounds (exclusive of Sundays),
 “ except during the time of crop, under the pe-
 “ nalty of ten pounds, to be recovered against the
 “ overseer, or other person having the care of such
 “ slaves.”

With comparatively very few indeed was it cus-
 tomary, and what follows, “ yet not being com-
 “ pulsory,” proves what I have asserted in a former
 note.

“ Lastly, with intention to prevent, as far as
 “ possible, the great mortality which has been
 “ stated to prevail among the new-born negro in-
 “ fants, it is also enacted, That, in case it shall
 “ appear to the satisfaction of the justices and
 “ vestry of each parish, from the returns re-
 “ quired to be made annually, there has been a
 “ natural increase in the number of slaves on any
 “ such plantation, pen, or other settlement, the
 “ overseer shall be entitled to receive from the
 “ owner

“ owner or proprietor of such plantation, pen, or
 “ other settlement, the sum of twenty shillings
 “ for every slave born on such plantation, pen, or
 “ other settlement, and which shall be then living,
 “ at the time of giving in such annual returns;
 “ and the owner or proprietor of such plantation,
 “ pen, or other settlement, shall have a deduction,
 “ from the first of his or her publick taxes that
 “ shall become due, of the sum so paid to the
 “ overseer, on producing a certificate of the justi-
 “ ces and vestry of such increase, and a receipt
 “ of the overseer for the sum so paid.”

This is a wise regulation, and more good may
 be expected from it than what would arise from the
 pecuniary reward. It will, I hope, and believe, be
 the means of introducing a laudable ambition
 amongst the overseers to take care of the negroes;
 and indeed I think that from the infamy that will
 in a little time stigmatize such neglect, or at
 least abuse, of them, much may be expected; but
 still more might be reasonably expected were the
 slave trade totally abolished now, or after the im-
 portation of more females.

The Committee proceed to say, that “ the mea-
 “ sure of abolishing the African slave trade must
 “ ruin the sugar islands.”

I know a plantation in St. Ann's, which in 17
 years hath by procreation, and without purchase,
 doubled its number of negroes, and two over. I
 know an instance where a deed of gift was made
 of eight negroes in the year 1744, of the pro-
 geny of which eight negroes, there are now in

1788, above sixty-four, that is just octuple, the original stock in forty-four years. The negroes on my own plantation, which within the last seven years has had its labour nearly doubled, by having many massy buildings to erect, and almost the whole grounds to fence by stone walls, and many other extraordinary things to do, keep up their numbers, and increase, notwithstanding the peculiar disadvantages arising from those circumstances, from the repeated hurricanes and their consequences in that period, and above all, notwithstanding that there is a great disproportion of the females to the males, of which former we at this time are deficient forty-three. Had I attended to the circumstance of proportioning the sexes when I first came into possession of the estate, I am convinced that by this time it would have overflowed with negroes, as would every plantation where the number of the sexes are duly proportioned, and humanity is exercised. This being my decided opinion, I am under no selfish apprehension from the abolition of the slave trade, nor need any one else be so, who will act agreeably to the dictates of conscience and common sense.

Yet it must be acknowledged, and I acknowledge it without reluctance, that the disproportion between the sexes is the source of infinite misery. It is the grand cause of the general prostitution of the negroe women, of disease, quarrel, bloodshed, incontinence, and want of population.*

NOTES

* It were to be wished our Author had been more explicit on this interesting point, the disproportion of the sexes. He seems to have formed his opinion from the particular situation of his own estate, rather

NOTES on the examination of JAMES CHISHOLME, Esq. annexed to the Report.

“ During fourteen years he has had the care
“ of four thousand negroes”—what sort of medical
care

rather than upon a general examination into the matter. The evils he here mentions arise not from the disproportion of the sexes, but from their *unequal distribution*. There are at this time 480,000 negro slaves in all the British sugar colonies. The *Africans* (who are imported in the proportion * of three females to five males) cannot exceed one-fifth of the whole, or 96,000; for these all die off in 15 years; and one-third in the first three years. But about 13 years ago, the war put a stop to their importation; so that four-fifths of all purchased before that time must be dead, and, since the peace in 1783, only 85,000 have been imported and kept in the British islands, and even of these a great part is now dead. Among the creoles or native slaves, who form four-fifths of the whole, or 384,000, the proportion of the sexes follows the course of nature.

Thus the negro slaves in all the British sugar islands divide themselves into

	Females	Males
384,000 creoles	192,000	192,000
96,000 imported Africans (3 to 5)	36,000	60,000

480,000

Females, 228,000—Males, 252,000

or exactly *nineteen* females to *twenty-one* males—a proportion not very different from that of the births of the sexes throughout the world, viz. of 19 females to 20 males.†

But the able calculator just referred to hath amply proved, that though the sexes *be born* in this last proportion, yet the number of females actually living, at any one time, is greater than that of the males.‡ Among many instances to prove this, he adduces the following remarkable ones: That temperate and healthy class of men, the church ministers, and professors of the Universities in Scotland, have a fund for the maintenance of their widows. The annual

* Jamaica Report.

† Price on Rev. pay. p. 16.

‡ Id. vol. I. p. 8, 81, 126, 366, 373; and vol. II. p. 8, 145, 245.

care one man can give to four thousand negroes, every two hundred of which on an average are on plantations

medium of their weddings is 30, and the annual medium of widows who have come upon the fund, for 35 years, is 19 and 1-10th. Of the 30 annual marriages then 19 and 1-10th are dissolved by the death of husbands, and not 11 by the death of wives; consequently the number of widows actually living is to the number of widowers as 19 and 1-10th is to 10 and 9-10ths, or nearly double.—In nine years ending in 1763, there were living in the whole kingdom of Sweden 10 females to 9 males. At Edinburgh, in 1743, there were found 4 females to 3 males.

But, what is more to our purpose, according to Montesquieu more girls than boys are born in hot climates.* And the accurate Kempfer † relates, that at Meaco there were found, by actual enumeration, 223,573 females, and only 182,072 males. Thus every circumstance conspires to prove that there are more females than males living in the world (especially in hot climates); and there is not the shadow of reason to suppose that the creole negroes are an exception to what appears to be the general order of procedure.

In all countries men live more irregularly, and are more liable to accidents than women, and every cause unfavourable to human life operates with peculiar force on negro men. They dissipate their vigour on a plurality of wives. It is well known that, to visit them (when their wives happen to be removed to a distance) the husbands make very long nocturnal excursions; returning to their drudgery the next morning, fatigued and dispirited. They are more refractory than the women; they oftener run away, and stay longer out. On the whole they commit more faults, and consequently suffer more inhuman treatment.—These are among the causes which contribute to render the lives of men slaves shorter than those of women slaves. The Guinea traders acknowledge that the men must be confined in chains, and the Jamaica Report complain of the disorders arising from it, which carry off great numbers in seasoning. The deaths in seasoning must be therefore principally among the men, and probably leave the sexes of the seasoned Africans nearly in an equal proportion. In the island of Nevis, female slaves are to the males as five to four. This is an old settled island, and consists chiefly of creoles.

The inconveniences and evils therefore, which our author complains of do not arise from the *inequality*, but from the *unequal distribu-*

* Esp. de Loix, liv. 16. ch. 4.

† Id. ibid.

plantations remote from each other, and this besides his practice amongst the white people, let the impartial judge.

“ That a great proportion of negro infants perish
 “ between the fifth and fourteenth days after their
 “ birth ; he believes nearly one-fourth part of all
 “ that are born.”

I believe on most plantations this may be the case, but I am confident it will not be so long: for, formidable as these medical men may affect to represent the disorder, the effects of which are so fatal, it is by no means impossible to prevent it; and I assert this on my own experience, for on my plantations this disorder was as frequent as on others, until I came to inspect and reside on them myself, since which it is become as rare as it was common before.

The account Mr. Chisholme gives of the disorder, in my opinion, points out the cure. If the disorder arises from irritation of the nerves of the umbilicus, how easy to prevent it? Prevent the cause, and you prevent the effect.

tion of the sexes. West India property is in a state of perpetual fluctuation. When estates are broken up, those who, like our Author, have the command of money buy the males (whether creoles or Africans) leaving the females to be purchased by poorer men. Hence, on some estates, the males predominate, and on others, the females. The total disregard paid in such cases, to the feelings and connections of negroes as human creatures, and even as animals, gives rise to all the misery our Author deplores; independent of the inequality of the sexes, which we have proved has in reality no existence.

“ That if he is right in his theory, respecting
 “ the cause of this complaint, it will be supposed
 “ that the remedy is obvious, as it will be only
 “ directing a greater attention to be paid to the
 “ dressing and cleanliness of the infant during the
 “ period above alluded to: But, simple as this may
 “ appear in theory, those who are much conversant
 “ with negroes, will be aware of the difficulty, if
 “ not impossibility, of putting it in practice, in
 “ a degree sufficient to answer the purpose: For,
 “ such is the ignorance, obstinacy, and inatten-
 “ tion of the negroes; so little regard have they
 “ for each other, and so averse are they to exe-
 “ cuting the directions of white people, when re-
 “ pugnant to their own prejudices, that he believes
 “ the evil can never be wholly remedied, while
 “ we are obliged to employ negroes as nurses.”

Here we see that the gentleman was perfectly aware of what he conceives would prevent this destructive disorder, which he himself says carries off nearly one of every four of all the negro children born in the island. Let the humane, let the statesman consider and reflect on the continual existence of a cause that annually diminishes one-fourth of the people. We see that Mr. Chisholme attributes the cause of this disorder not being prevented to the ignorance, obstinacy, and inattention of negroes. Will not the sensible reader of his answers conceive, that before we admit the negligence and inattention of a mother to her infant to be the cause of its destruction, there would be more justice and probability in considering that some part of the cause at least arises from medical men, who, by taking charge of such numbers of negroes, have not time

to

to instruct them, and dissipate that ignorance (the cause of obstinacy) which is attended with such fatal effects ?

“ That a very great number of newly-imported
 “ negroes are lost by diseases, the predisposing
 “ causes of which they bring to this country along
 “ with them : Most new negroes, when first land-
 “ ed, are much subject to putrid complaints, arising
 “ from a scorbutic habit contracted during the
 “ voyage, which frequently manifests itself soon
 “ after they are landed, in putrid dysenteries, or
 “ by foul ulcers, tending strongly to mortifica-
 “ tion. Many negroes, while aboard, are affected
 “ with the most virulent venereal complaints ;
 “ others have the yaws ; some, malignant ulcers ;
 “ all of which, when the day of sale draws near,
 “ are, by the management of the ship’s surgeon,
 “ dried up, and the morbid matter repelled into
 “ the system, so that the surface of the skin shall
 “ appear clean and smooth for a time, but which
 “ afterwards creates the most dreadful complaints,
 “ too frequently baffling all attempts to cure.

The putrid complaints arise from putrid air, putrid water, and uncleanness occasioned almost altogether by the too great numbers crammed into comparatively small ships in a torrid climate—want of good water and provisions, and ventilators, to purify the air.

NOTES on the Examination of ADAM ANDERSON, Practitioner in Physick and Surgery.

“ That with one partner he had the physical care “ of near 4000 slaves”—by *physical care* is meant, that he and his partner were the physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and men midwives to 4000.

“ That one-fourth of negroe infants perish of “ the tetanus, and but one-tenth of the white infants,”—the cause is obvious; forty times the care is taken of the whites, and the consequence of that care is the difference in the proportion of deaths.

To the irritation of the umbilicus, assigned as the cause of the tetanus by Doctor Chisholme, this gentleman adds that of the putrid matter suffered to generate during (and he might have said, and after) the separation of that cord, both which, with the fatal consequences, I shall by and by shew are most easily prevented.

“ That he does not believe the disorder, in “ general, is owing to any improper mode of “ treatment of the infant, as he has often known “ it occur, notwithstanding the greatest care; and “ that, from the rapidity of the disorder, and the “ tender age of the patient, he knows of no certain remedy that succeeded, either from the application of opiates, or any other medicine, once “ in twenty times: That it occurs in high and “ healthy situations as well as in low ones, in “ mountainous districts, as well as those near the “ sea side.”

In all these circumstances I differ totally from the doctor.

“ That he is of opinion, that many negro children die of that disorder peculiar to the Africans, called the yaws, particularly if they are infected during the first year; which the mothers in general attempt to effect, on purpose to excuse themselves from labour.”

“ Who shall decide when doctors disagree?” Some doctors are of the same opinion respecting the small pox.—And I, who am no doctor, but who in the course of my peregrinations have frequently been obliged to supply, as well as I could, the place of doctor, surgeon, and apothecary, both to myself and hundreds of others, and through mercy with no small success—I say, I differ wholly from the doctor in this point, and think that at no time can a negro have the yaws with such probability of getting easily through them, as when nourished from his mother’s breast.

“ That he is of opinion, notwithstanding those inconveniencies already enumerated, there is very considerable increase of negroes on the properties of this island, particularly in the parish where he resides.”

Viz. the parish of Saint Ann’s.—It is in this parish where the instance, quoted in a former note of the negroes on a plantation having doubled and more in seventeen years, occurred. But it is also in this parish where the instance is of one man having buried in a few years 300 and odd negroes.
The

The fact is, that every parish in the island is generally healthy, and all of them unhealthy in some particular situations; but the great causes of increase or decrease is not the parish, but the particular regimen and management on particular plantations.

“ That the losses sustained in seasoning newly-imported negroes, are chiefly owing to the many disorders they bring with them, either from Africa, or contracted on board ship; such as, venereals, the yaws, and old habitual ulcers.”

“ The number of obstinate cases he has met with, induced him to inquire of surgeons that had been in that trade, respecting the mode of treatment during the voyage; and that he has been informed, it was customary to suppress venereals by astringent injections; to cause the yaws and ulcers to disappear by ischuretic washes; and on the day of sale, or a few days before, to hide the scars with blacking and palm-oil: That the epidemic dysentery is frequent on board ship; and though the surgeons have a method of concealing it on the day of sale, in some measure, by astringents, yet it frequently breaks out after the negroes have landed, with double fury: Of which he remembers the following remarkable instance in Colin Campbell, of Saint Ann’s, having bought thirty negroes in Kingston; an epidemic dysentery broke out among them soon after their arrival at the plantation, of which twenty-four of them died; the disorder was communicated to the rest of the negroes on
“ the

“ the plantation, and several of them likewise fell
 “ a sacrifice to it.”

This gentleman agrees with the others in the undoubted fact, that negroes bring here with them putrid diseases, contracted on board the ships during the voyage.—All which testimonies it is to be hoped will induce the British legislature, whose right it is to regulate, direct, and controul the general Commerce of the Empire, to attend to and provide the necessary remedies against these very pernicious and ruinous effects of putridity.

NOTES on the EXAMINATION of JOHN QUIER.

This gentleman also hath had for the greater part of twenty-one years the care of 4000 to 5000 negroes. I shall here observe, that to a regiment of five or six hundred men there is one surgeon, who hath one or more mates or assistants; that to each ship of war, having on board from three to five hundred men, there is also a surgeon and surgeon's mates. Now if a surgeon and surgeon's mates are necessary to five hundred men, all collected in a small space, what care can one or two men, acting as physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and occasionally men midwives—I say, what care can they take of 4000 or 5000 negroes, every two hundred of whom, on an average, are on a plantation distant some miles from the other, besides his or their practice amongst the white families, each of which is also distant from the others?

I ap-

I apprehend it will be thought much easier, under such circumstances, to find fault with the ignorance, obstinacy, and inattention of such negroes, than to take care of them, inform, persuade, or watch over them for good. Once, twice, or thrice in a week, to gallop to a plantation, to take a peep into the hospital, or hot-house, as it is called, write in a book, "bleed this," "purge that," "blister another," "here give an opiate," "there the bark," is not, in my opinion, taking care of, though it may be called taking charge of, the healths of 4000 or 5000 negroes.

But to proceed with Doctor Quier's examination. We shall see that he attributes the disorders to which the negroe children are incident, to the want of cleanliness; the obstinate attachment of negroe women to their own old customs; and particularly to their not shifting the child's cloaths, sometimes from want of linen, and other necessities, proper for new-born infants. It is easy, and perhaps convenient, to throw blame on negroe women, but here the truth comes out at last, and the word *sometimes*, must be considered as a defensive salvo, which each plantation under the doctor's care will apply to the others, and none to themselves; and which if the doctor had not put in, it is probable the 5000 or 5000 negroes, of which he tells us he has the care, would have presently been reduced to 400 or 500.

"That the negroe women, whether slaves or free, do not, in his opinion, breed so frequently, as the women amongst the labouring poor in Great Britain: that he ascribes this
"chiefly

“ chiefly to the promiscuous intercourse, which
 “ the greater number of negroe women indulge
 “ themselves in with the other sex. That he be-
 “ lieves the abortions, which he thinks to be ra-
 “ ther frequent amongst them, to be ascribable to
 “ the same cause : That he has not met with any
 “ cases of abortion, which he could fairly impute
 “ to ill usage or excessive labour : That moderate
 “ labour is beneficial to pregnant women, as being
 “ the best means of preserving general health.”

I am afraid the reason here assigned, by the doctor, for many of the abortions, is but too true ; it is the natural consequence of the disproportion in the number of the sexes. But when the doctor says he has not met with any cases of abortion which he could “ fairly impute to ill usage or excessive labour :” please to recollect what I have said above on the expression *sometimes*, which, I apprehend, means much the same ; and I wish the doctor could, with safety to his practice, have used the same word, instead of *not* and *any* ; at least, if this alteration of words be not an amendment, I will say the doctor is singularly happy in his situation.

“ That the custom of carrying young children
 “ into the field, in the manner, and with the pre-
 “ cautions it is now practised, is by no means hurt-
 “ ful to the infants.”

I am of opinion, generally speaking, that the more both infants and adults are in the open air the better ; but the doctor must allow me to dissent from his assertion in some particular cases ; and let others judge. Suppose an infant tied on its
 mother's

mother's back, and carried to the field, then laid in a bowl or tray, exposed to the direct rays of the sun; should a sudden and heavy rain fall, as is very common in these climates, I say, *that* can hardly be beneficial to the infant, and still less so its remaining in wet rags. I mention this for two reasons, one is, to shew that those medical gentlemen have suppressed whatever might tend to give an unfavourable idea of our lenity to the negroes; and the other is to shew how necessary it is to have some means of shelter for the negroes, either by erecting tents, or building sheds contiguous to the fields, in heavy, though transient showers, and to call them from the fields when it appears that the rain will continue. I am led to this last observation by having been an eye-witness, when I was last at —: Upwards of forty negroes were kept at work in the open field for more than four hours, that is, till night shut in, during a constant and heavy rain.

I am obliged to conclude abruptly, but may add something more on this subject by another conveyance.

I am,

Yours, &c.

* * *

F I N I S.